

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:08 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Brig. Gen. William David, USA, Commander, Task Force

Falcon. H.R. 2216, approved July 24, was assigned Public Law No. 107–20.

## Statement on the Balkans *July 24, 2001*

Last month in Warsaw, I spoke about the importance of building a Europe that is whole, free, and at peace. I said that this new Europe must include the Balkans. A few years ago, that vision would have seemed fanciful. Today as I meet here with our forces at Camp Bondsteel, that vision is within our reach.

Croatia has become a responsible source of regional stability. The people of Yugoslavia have chosen democracy over dictatorship and have sent their former dictator to The Hague. Albania's recent elections, while less than perfect, were still a step forward in its democratic development. There are moderate governments in Bosnia-Herzegovina willing to work as serious partners with the international community in preparing their country for European integration. For the first time in history, all the governments of the region are democratic, committed to cooperating with each other, and predisposed to joining Europe.

But difficult challenges remain. Civil institutions are weak and vulnerable to corruption. Organized crime is widespread, sometimes hiding behind narrow, nationalistic agendas. There is too much dependence on foreign assistance and not enough foreign investment. And ethnic extremists are still stoking the flames of intolerance and inciting violence, hoping to subvert democracy, redraw borders, or advance criminal pursuits.

The greatest challenge today is in Macedonia, where armed insurgents threaten peace and stability. Some here in Kosovo are trying to help the insurgents. Let me be clear: The United States stands against

all who use or support violence against democracy and the rule of law. That's why American forces in Kosovo are interdicting the flow of arms into Macedonia. And that's why I imposed sanctions against individuals and organizations assisting the insurgents. The United States, EU, and NATO strongly back ongoing efforts to find a political settlement—one that addresses the legitimate grievances of the Albanian population while protecting Macedonia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, its political unity, and its democratic future. I call on all parties to maintain the cease-fire. And I call on the elected leaders to work with EU envoy Leotard and Ambassador Pardew to overcome the remaining differences to achieving a settlement that will keep Macedonia at peace and on the road to Europe.

Those here in Kosovo who support the insurgency in Macedonia are hurting the interests of ethnic Albanians throughout the region. The people of Kosovo should focus on Kosovo. They need to concentrate on developing civil institutions that work and a political climate that supports and sustains democracy, the rule of law, ethnic tolerance, and cooperation with neighbors. November's election will be an important step in that direction. We call on all people of Kosovo to participate, so that no one is denied the benefits of democracy. As the people and countries of the Balkans move closer to Europe, it is only natural that Europe assume increasing leadership and responsibility. I welcome the European Union's commitment to play a leading role in the stabilization and development of the region. I similarly welcome the willingness

*July 24 / Administration of George W. Bush, 2001*

of our Allies to provide the bulk of the NATO task force poised to collect the insurgents' weapons after a peaceful settlement in Macedonia. The cooperation of the United States, NATO, and the EU in Macedonia is a model that we can build upon in the future.

More than 30 countries—NATO Allies, NATO partners, and other friends—are, together with America, providing forces here in Kosovo. We understand that America's contribution is essential, both militarily and politically. We will not draw down our forces in Bosnia or Kosovo precipitously or unilaterally. We came in together, and we will go out together. But our goal is to hasten the day when peace is self-sustaining, when local, democratically elected authorities can assume full responsibility, and when NATO's forces can go home. This means that we must reorganize and

reenergize our efforts to build civil institutions and promote rule of law. It also means that we must step up our efforts to transfer responsibilities for public security from combat forces to specialized units, international police, and ultimately local authorities. NATO's commitment to the peace of this region is enduring, but the stationing of our forces here should not be indefinite.

The American soldiers here at Camp Bondsteel—and at bases and on patrol elsewhere in Kosovo and in Bosnia—symbolize America's commitment to building the better, broader, more peaceful Europe that is within our grasp. We are very proud of our soldiers and of the American diplomats and civil police who work alongside them. Together with our Allies and friends and the people of the Balkans, we are confident that we will reach this common goal.

## Statement on Signing the Supplemental Appropriations Act, FY 2001 *July 24, 2001*

Today I signed into law H.R. 2216, the "Supplemental Appropriations Act, FY 2001," which provides funding for the Department of Defense and other departments.

This important supplemental appropriation provides urgently needed resources to enhance defense readiness and operations and maintenance; to improve the morale of our service men and service women, and their families; to provide needed home energy assistance for low-income families; to aid victims of radiation exposures associated with the Government's nuclear weapons testing program; to provide a U.S. contribution for the global trust fund to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis; and for other purposes.

I commend the Congress for expeditiously providing critical resources needed to improve our support for our men and

women in the military while maintaining a strict fiscal discipline. The Congress provided this additional funding within the budget agreement's discretionary spending limits. The resources I requested for the Department of Defense will help our military readiness and help lay the groundwork for further strengthening after Secretary Rumsfeld's ongoing strategy review.

I applaud the Congress for passing this bill without resorting to the abusive use of the emergency designation. We have seen "emergencies" become a recurring part of the budget process, and become magnets for special-interest, non-essential spending.

I will continue to work with the Congress and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to see that FEMA meets